



NOTRE DAME EDUCATION CENTER

"A Place of Hope"

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOTRE DAME EDUCATION CENTER TEACHER RECOGNIZED

Donna Pomponio, A Case Manager for Notre Dame Education Center's (NDEC) High School Diploma Program (HSDP), was presented with the **Massachusetts Alliance for Adult Literacy Special Recognition Award** at the May 16th MassAAL Conference which took place in Holyoke. MassAAL recognized Donna not only for her experiences in the field of adult literacy but also for her spirit and determination that is valued in her field and in society as a whole. Donna received this award as a result of a speech she made on March 13th at the statehouse during Adult Literacy Awareness Day as sponsored by the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA).

Donna's own journey started back in the early 70's when, unable to continue with her education in a traditional high school setting, she took full advantage of earning a GED. In her speech at the MassAAL conference, Donna stated, *"The GED gave me hope and dared me to dream. It gave me the courage and the confidence to look ahead and for a way out."* She went on to share, *"With a GED I was no longer behind my traditional classmates but I actually felt as though I had an equal footing with them. I began to have a sense of belonging. I began to feel that I could fit in and actually compete."*

Donna's first experience with NDEC and one that she refers to as her best "gig", was through an internship she had teaching art back in 2002. With the exception of one year, she has remained at NDEC where she continues to positively impact the lives of the students in the High School Diploma Program.

At the conclusion of her presentation she remarked, *"I would not be here today without that GED. My work as teacher, mentor, case manager and soon to be program coordinator for the HSDP was all made possible by the availability of the basic fundamental tools offered to me through and alternative program. I speak to you today as the luckiest person in the world. My non-traditional life and my college degree have allowed me the best job I could ever have dreamed of."*

In its 15 years of existence, the Notre Dame Education Center in South Boston has helped thousands of adult students to learn English, earn a high school diploma, or prepare for a citizenship exam through the administration of one or more of their various program offerings such as GED, APP Diploma or Online Learning, to name a few. They currently have about 450 students in morning, afternoon and evening classes and some also study online. Each year about 40 students are awarded high school diplomas, either traditional diplomas, General Education Diplomas or Adult Diplomas. The Literacy Department also offers Adult Basic Education, and students can get computer training and job counseling.

The Notre Dame Education Center's mission is to provide a community-based, comprehensive adult learning and literacy program through the provision of a variety of education programs underscored by the values of respect, understanding and quality services.

If you would like more information about NDEC, please contact Anne Metrick, Executive Director, at 617-268-1912 or email her at ametrick@ndecboston.org.